

Safety On The Road

Are You A Good Driver?

What does it take to be a good driver? Skill, natural ability and good training will help get you there. Caution, careful observance of traffic laws, and company policies and a good attitude are also vital aspects of good driving.

Try this checklist to see if you can call yourself a good driver:

- You don't have any accidents.
- You don't commit any traffic violations. You drive within the speed limit and observe other rules of the road in the city and on the highway.
- You adjust your driving speed to match road conditions. Poor visibility, traffic congestion and slippery road surfaces are your cues to slow down.
- You meet your schedules, delivering your load on time and in good condition.
- You are courteous to customers and the public, because you know you are often the only representative of the company they ever meet.
- You take good care of vehicles, making sure they are in good condition before operating them, and they are maintained regularly. You use correct driving techniques to reduce the wear and tear on the vehicle.
- You have a working knowledge of basic repairs so you can get moving again if something goes wrong.
- You report to work well-rested and ready to give all of your attention to driving safely. You get enough sleep and you look after your health.
- You don't use alcohol or drugs before working, while working or during your breaks. You are aware of the deadly consequences of driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and you always abstain when you have to drive.
- You wear your seat belt at all times when the vehicle is in motion. Even if you are traveling at low speeds and making frequent stops, you take the time to buckle your seat belt each time you start again.
- You carry no riders, according to company policy and the design of the vehicle. This is important not only for over-the-road trucks, but for in-plant vehicles, construction equipment and farm machinery, much of which is designed to carry only the driver safely. Passengers perching on equipment or riding in the cargo decks can be thrown from the vehicle and run over, or crushed in a rollover accident. Picking up a hitchhiker along a road can introduce a violent stranger into your cab.
- You turn off your vehicle and lock it when it is unattended. In doing so, you reduce the chances of the vehicle slipping into gear and rolling, or being stolen.
- You set the parking brake when stopping on a hill.
- You do not get angry at the driving mistakes of others.
- You do not need to be in front of all the other vehicles at the expense of safety.
- You continue to take advantage of driver training and upgrading, no matter how experienced you are. You realize you can always learn something new.
- You and your vehicle are a traveling advertisement for your company. The truck or trailer with your company's name and logo on it are like a big billboard going down the highway. Your courteous and safe driving behavior is a positive reflection on your company.

How did you do on the checklist? If this list describes you, then you can call yourself a good driver!

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